

**Testimony on behalf of Raised Bill No. 6499 *An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes***

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- As a truancy case manager, my primary mission is to support students who are not yet fully invested in their education or are facing certain difficulties that prevent them from committing their full efforts. This is a near impossible task when schools have trouble identifying which students are in most need of services that we may be able to provide. It is incredibly frustrating to find out far too late about students and families who were in need for months, but never identified.
  - If schools are required to follow a stricter protocol concerning prolonged unexcused absences, it follows that they will be more aware of those students whom they can, and in some cases should, refer to outside agencies.
  - Moreover, as schools and agencies participate together more frequently, they should grow in their ability to collaborate and help troubled students.
- In addition to aiding in the prompt identification of proper clients for truancy prevention and intervention programs, the approval of this bill would also contribute to the success of these programs. In general, effective case management requires the building of relationships and trust. Therefore, the earlier that students are referred and enrolled, the better the chance that case manager and student will build a positive relationship.
  - Mandating that a FWSN be filed after 30 days of a child being deemed “truant” will hopefully encourage a more proactive stance on the part of Connecticut schools with regards to referrals. Earlier referrals means a case manager has a longer period of time to help students reassess their commitment to education.
  - Delaying the solution of a problem can only lead to more problems. Streamlining the timeline for filing a FWSN in truancy situations will call both schools and families to task in a way that is not only beneficial to students, but also cost-effective in the long and short term.